

THE LADY CLARA. THE TWO SISTERS; AGNES WALTHAM.
MONMOUTH HARGRAVE. THE SMITHS.

By BENJAMIN B. THOM.

Reader, whoever you are that may be fortunate enough to commence reading this paper, whether old or young, male or female, I am about to give you advice for which you ought to bless me, and an admonition for which you should reverence me: the advice and the admonition are equally brief—"beware of the Smiths! and do this whether they come to you in the abbreviated appellation of "the Smiths," or extend themselves into the elongated designation of "the Smythes." Credit me, they are all the same; and once you permit a Smith to shake hands with you, you will have the whole tribe upon you. After so fatal a calamity as being on friendly terms with a Smith, you might as well think of driving away a swarm with the queen bee settled on your head, as banishing the Smiths, that is, if unfortunately you have a roof to shelter them.

Somebody has said, but my mind is so confused with the Smiths that I cannot tell by whom, that "History is the best teacher, as all her precepts are enforced by example." Let me then be my own historian, in order that the world may be taught by my misfortunes. Poor, innocent, happy, ignorant youth that I was! There was a time when all appeared gay and smiling around me. Blessed with health, I thought Peter's Pills a humbug; and as to Rowland's Macassar Oil, I considered it an egregious delusion; for my thick, dark hair twined in natural curls around my then unwrinkled brow. Possessing a sufficient fortune, not only for my wants, but even enough to gratify my wishes, I had troops of friends, and enjoying excellent animal spirits, whatever I said was declared by them to be "excellently jocose," and "wonderfully witty." Alas! those good times are gone by. My health is impaired, my money is nearly expended, my friends have disappeared, and I am moody and melancholy, for—I have married a Smith!

It is now, I feel, somewhat more than three centuries; but, according to that heartless time-keeper, the calendar, something less than three years, since ill luck brought me to the evening party where I first saw her, who now, most inappropriately terms me "lord and master." The fair lady destined to be my future spouse was sitting lonely and deserted. I must admit that she was young and handsome. I enquired why she was so forsaken, and the answer given was, that she was "one of the Smiths;" that her family were high, proud, it was reported, rich, and, it was known, as innumerable as the green leaves in the summer woods. "Deaf as the adder" was I to the kind friends who thus forewarned me. My fate was fixed. I asked the enchanting Felicia Ophelia Smith to be my partner in a quadrille. She was small as a fairy, light as a fawn, lovely as a nymph. I admired her in "advancing," I was captivated in the "baktned" and heart-stricken in a "dos a doe" Every step she took was a new knot in the bands of Hymen, and I am now tied neck and heels, with all the Smiths, to the third and fourth generation, capering over me.

I know not whether Solomon or any other wise man has remarked that which my sad fate has taught me, that "the days of courtship are short, though they were to endure for twenty years; while those of matrimony are long, though they should terminate in a twelve-month." I shall, (for mine is a wofil tale) therefore pretermite the few weeks I passed as a lover. They were the rays of the evening star to my day of happiness; and even these were crossed by some clouds. I became the avowed suitor of Miss Felicia Ophelia. By none were my attentions more cordially received than by her venerated father, Samuel Smith, Esq., of Smith Hall, Smithtown, and her eldest brother, Captain Alexander Julius Cesar Smith. The Captain was none of your stand-off acquaintances; men who measure their bows and graduate their nods with as much nicety as if they were filling out doses of physic — for themselves, and with whom proffers of kindness, expressions of regard, and tenders of friendship, are as carefully watched as sovereigns. On the contrary, the Captain, the very first evening he met me, declared he was "body and soul devoted to me;" the next day he shook hands with me, the third day called me by my Christian name, and in a week afterward placed

his life and reputation (1) in my hands, by appointing me his friend, in as ugly an affair of honor as I ever yet was engaged in. I have entirely too much to say about the Smiths to enter into the details of the Captain's conduct in this transaction. It is sufficient to affirm, that if all the officers in the British army were as careful of their precious lives at Waterloo, as my respected relative, Alexander Julius Cesar usually was, on all occasions of danger, Napoleon would have supped in Brussels on the evening of the eighteenth of June, 1815. He had in fact, placed himself in that most unenviable of positions, with his name upon every lamp-post in the neighborhood, and an opinion of his " martial propensities," appended thereto. The Captain wanted to fight himself into a good character; and it was my duty to deliver a message to the gentleman who had taken the trouble of describing Alexander Julius Cesar as being " an exceedingly peaceable individual." Of course the message was declined^and in perfect accordance to the rule in such cases, I had to " call out" the poster, who being an excellent shot, and a very good-natured man, and having some pity on my youth and inexperience, was satisfied in shooting off the skirt of my new black coat, with a decent portion of the leg. My pain, anxiety and trouble, however, were greatly compensated by the asseverations of Alexander Julius Cesar, that his honor was fully satisfied.

The esteem of Samuel Smith, Esq., for the wounded defender of his heir's reputation was openly manifested in my regard, and displayed itself to such an extent, that, at the very first visit I paid to his house, upon my recovery, he said he should always treat me " as one of the family," and in proof of that, he " felt no hesitation in asking me for the loan of five hundred dollars." The money was given, and his high opinion of me was shown in his jumping at my offer for his daughter's hand, apprising me, however, that her dowry, of which he would not state the amount, but gave me to understand it was "worth some thousands," would not be paid until—his demise. I may as well remark here, that since I married, old Smith seems to be growing younger every day. He is a perennial plant, ever blooming. He has a cruelly good constitution. He rises regularly at an early hour in the morning, lives

upon vegetables, drinks no wine, and never affords the evening dews a fair opportunity of catching him with a cold, or even giving him a slight touch of rheumatism. There is, in short, every appearance of his living for ever, and of my coming into possession of his daughter's fortune the day after the day of judgment.

But let me hasten to the sad crisis of my fate. I was —I have been—alas! I am married to Felicia Ophelia (no longer) Smith. At the breakfast on the-day of my wedding, there was no room at any of the tables for one of the very few friends of my own I had invited—all the places were occupied by the Smiths. There was a shopful of "favors," and a wagon-load of bride cakes exhausted on them alone. The county appeared to me to be covered with a shower of white ribbons; and yet no human being wore them, but those bearing that detestable name. Hills of confectionary were brought to the level of a railway by their insatiable stomachs; they were the harpies at the feast, and their claws clutched everything eatable. That morning, an hour after I had been married, and with the kiss of my virgin bride fresh upon my lip, I saw all the horrors of the sad future before me. I saw that I was cut off from friends, kindred, country, pleasure, peace, quiet, happiness, and banished amongst the Smiths. I was Gulliver, and my companions, Yahoos. They wished me "happiness," and I wished them in Timbuctoo. My old household gods I beheld displaced, and crammed down the hideous maw of the modern Smith Juggernaut, which was set up as the only idol to be worshipped at my hearth. I abandoned my own home to pass the honeymoon, as I thought, in a quiet, retired village; and as I drove from the door all cried out, "Joy, joy!" after me; but to my ear the words came metamorphosed to "Smith, Smith!"

Before I was a week married, I discovered that my Felicia Ophelia was devotedly attached to her family— that she prided herself not less on its antiquity and nobleness (for one of the Smiths she assured me had been a Scotch earl) than she did upon the present extent of its ramifications—a Smith being, like a thistle, discoverable in every county, district, and corner

of the States. Before my honeymoon had half filled its orb, its happiness was all eclipsed by my failing to express my delight, one morning at breakfast, at having to pay ten dollars postage on letters of congratulation from the Smiths, the Smyths, and the Smythes, who, from the north, south, east, and west, filled the mail-bags (and forgot to pay for their epistles) with the sweetest expressions of superlative love for "their dear Felicia Ophelia, and the amiable partner of her connubial felicity !" I really could not appreciate such costly proofs of the esteem of those whom, I would have been rejoiced to hear had been all engulfed in the Red Sea. Since then, the over fondness of my spouse has rapidly diminished, and before our loves were blessed with a boy, had entirely disappeared. This misfortune happened, even though I paid, without a murmur, for the first month of our marriage, fifteen shillings per diem, at least, for letters from all her relations and kindred.

The first month of marriage "dragged its slow length along," and I returned to my house, but home no longer. In my absence I found that there had domiciliated themselves there old Mr. Smith and his four sons; for so much was Felicia Ophelia entwined in their affections, that they could not bear the idea of being separated from her, and therefore —they all came to live with me. Nothing could exceed the delight and pleasure of my kind-hearted wife at this marked demonstration of their attachment to her. She was the first day of our return all joy and spirits, and when she could spare time from chattering with all her dear, beloved relatives, she would recollect herself so far as to speak to me. Here again I am greatly afraid I failed in amiability, and particularly so when I discovered that no part of the house was left unappropriated by the Smiths. My study was changed into a sleeping chamber for the old gentleman, as it had a fine, healthy, southern aspect I admit it, that to rid myself of them, I, knowing my man, and how safe it was to dispute with him, created, —I cannot even say made —a quarrel with the Captain, and kicked him out That evening, to show her resentment, my wife separated from me, and I had the happiness of passing it alone, and in the room that the atrocious Alexander Julius Caesar had destined to himself; but

I had to abandon it the next morning, for the gallant warrior actually walked in to breakfast, and requested of me—nay, insisted—that we should never think of the occurrences of the past night, as "no circumstance would ever induce him to feel an enmity against the husband of his beloved sister!" I resigned myself to my fate in despair, as I saw that my habitation fitted the Smiths, as the shell does the snail, and that death alone could divide them from each other.

From the time that my house has been thus colonized I have lived in a riot, and breathed in a tumult. My estate and fortune are like an hostile country, "laid under contribution," and the Smiths eat and drink as if they were "quartering on the enemy." To them are offered up hecatombs of oxen, flocks of sheep, and all the tribes of birds that fill the air, from the gorgeous pheasant to the plain plumaged snipe. The fishes in vain seek to hide themselves in the briny deep, or in the darkest nook of the most retired stream. The Smiths bait their hooks, or sink their nets, with my gold, and the stately sturgeon is no more secure from them, than the diminutive white-bait. Before them the septemli- cated coat of proof with which nature has armed the turtle, is as weak and fragile as the transparent shell of the shrimp. I never yet have seen the Smiths feeding (eating gives no idea of their voracity); but I have thought that in my case the fable of Cadmus was reversed; with him teeth were changed into aTmed men—while, for me, men appear to be changed into teeth !

Amid all the vexations that I have suffered, I can, however wonderful to say, speak in terms of praise of one of my brothers-in-law, Mr. William Smith. Blessings on his name! for I have never seen his long nose and wide mouth for two entire years. During all that time he has voluntarily vacated his seat, and resigned his bed-room. May prosperity attend him in whatever land he visits; for I have never beheld him since he borrowed my best trotter, my matchless Manton, and two of my choicest setters. May he never get tired of them, or may my mare break his neck, or some of those dear delightful "accidents to sporting gentlemen," at the commencement of every shooting

season, cover him, instead of a bird, with a double charge of swan shot! So as I never look upon him again, I care not whether he marries a princess, or is snugly encased in his coffin. Even for the short time he has absented himself, I shall «love him while living, and respect him when dead." How different, how vastly different is the propriety of his conduct, from that of my third brother-in-law, Mr. Isaac Newton Smith, who seems to be of the opinion of Tristram Shandy's father, that genius is given with a baptismal appellation; and, as a proof of the profundity of his thoughts, never deserts my library.

Reader, I envy you, if you have not married a Smith —if you have, then you can feel for my deplorable condition.

P. S. I have just heard that old Smith died suddenly. His will has been opened, and instead of bequeathing to me the fortune he promised, all he has left me is —his blessing / My curse upon the Smiths!



MONMOUTH HARGRAVE.

A STORY OF THE HEART.

It was in a crowded hail. Thousands had congregated to pay the tribute of respect and gratitude to the aged warrior, whose best days had been spent in the service of his country. The magnates of the land were there, the young, the lovely, and the beautiful, each and all with anxious countenances to behold, perhaps for the last time, one of the few remaining links which connect the present generation with the sacred remembrance and chivalrous valor of the revolution. His young heroism had been tried in that glorious struggle, and crowned with immortal glory in the last war. Many,

many grateful hearts prest around him to catch a look at the man, of whom Fame had spoken in deafening plaudits. They had learned to lisp his name from the cradle, and to think of him as one commanding all their love and gratitude.

Never did I see curiosity so great. It seemed to pervade the vast multitude, and to animate them with one common impulse. Though the crowd was immense, silence reigned, like a deity, throughout that spacious ball. The feeling was too profound for utterance. The admiring throng approached with reverence the bent form of the once gallant soldier, and pressing his hand with fervor, retired in silence, mentally bespeaking blessings on his head, now silvered over with the frosts of winter. Nor were the fair behind others in those grateful manifestations of respect.

In the foremost rank of that concourse of people, stood one who looked upon the pageant with indifference. Not that he was insensible to the emotions of gratitude—but that care and grief had made sad inroads upon his once buoyant feelings, and had blunted his keen perception of the novel and the curious. His thoughts were busy in another department than that of mere gratitude. Woman in her loveliness was arrayed before him, and as he glanced his eye along that brilliant line of beauty, it is not strange that he should momentarily forget the chief, who was occupying all thoughts. But he could not help remarking that it was cold and inanimate beauty—not such as causes the blood to tingle, even to our fingers' ends, upon first sight.

I know that I am treading upon disputed ground, when I speak of love at first sight. But if it is a conceded point that we are favorably or unfavorably imprest in our passage through the world with those whom we accidentally meet—and that we are so there is no gainsaying—the whole question is yielded. For there is no greater physiognomist than your lover. His very trade is to read the face, and to arrive at some opinion of the temper, amiability, and loveliness of the object, by closely studying that index. And the degree of favor, or dislike, determines our love or Hate. But leaving this disquisition

to others who have more time and space, we will return to our story.

He had loved devotedly—truly—but misfortune, with its iron heel, had stamped its footprints upon the tablets of his heart. It was not in his calculations of the probable, that he could meet any being for whom he could feel more than ordinary interest. And yet, he was anxiously desirous of finding someone, who could warm his heart into newness of life, and bring back those delicious transports which he feared were gone, and forever. He looked upon it as barely possible that he could find such an one. Hence, the coldness and indifference with which his eye roamed from face to face, and with which he looked upon the brilliant spectacle before him. Still, there was a latent, and perhaps, almost undefined hope, lurking in his bosom, that he would again be blessed with visions of happiness.

Impelled by this feeling, he had sought society whenever it was to be found. He had mingled in the gay throng, and forced himself to smile at the pretty nothings which greeted him on every hand. But " he smiled in such a sort as if he mocked himself." He attempted to join in the merry laugh, but his laugh, so different from its former ringing joyousness, would startle him like a peal of thunder. Delighting in conversation, he would mingle in the general amusement by contributing his share, but his voice sounded like the hollow echoes of a funeral chamber. His heart was like a withered leaf in his bosom. It had no vitality—no sympathy with things around him. He lived in society without enjoying its blessings. He was miserable in spite of himself. Such—such was Monmouth Hargrave. Disgusted with himself, he would retire, and in gloomy melancholy brood over his lurking cares and bitter griefs for days.

Society, at length, became almost hateful to him. It was only after rousing himself that he could venture into it. On this occasion, he cast his eye again and again, along that splendid column of female beauty, with the faint hope of finding some token which would bring back to him his long lost happiness—some look of sympathy and of tenderness, which would send a thrill of joy through his heart, and make his existence a blessing, not a curse.

With a sigh, he shook his head, as if in utter despair. To him, all appeared to be devoid of true and genuine feeling. There was nothing but pretensions and heartless insincerity. No heart!— no nature!—no soul!

I was standing close at his side, and heard his heart broken sigh. My acquaintance was of that intimate character which let me into the secret workings of his soul. I knew the uppermost wish of his heart was to find some woman who could love him with her whole soul. Such a gentle being, made of creation's best, it was his desire to win, and wed—someone, who possessed noble and generous feelings, an enlarged and liberal heart, true and undissembled amiability, and an intellect as expansive as the universe. I knew this, more from my knowledge of his character, than from any positive assurances, and when I saw him turn away after his fruitless search, I thought the iron of despair entered deeper into his soul.

At length I felt he grasped my arm as if in a vice. " Who? who, in the name Heaven, is that lady, with light brown hair!" said my friend, in a frenzy of madness. " I must know who she is," continued he, " for she is an angel. I could not have overlooked her—no! no! She must have just entered the hall. By Heaven I would give worlds to know who she is."

His gestures became so violent, and his whispers so loud, that I begged him to control himself, lest we should be exposed. "Exposed," said he, "what care I for the phantom, exposure? Have I not diligently searched over one fourth of the globe to find just such a being? Look at her eye, large, soft, and hazel—her mouth, all sweetness and delicacy—her countenance, cheerful and lovely—her air, elegant and accomplished —her grace, polished and refined—her form, symmetry itself—her-

"Hold! hold!" said I, interrupting him. "This is no place for your new-born rapture. Have done with your jingling epithets. Put a bridle upon your wild impetuosity. Be advised, and observe her well, but be silent."

Monmouth Hargrave was breathless with the praises of the new star which had so unexpectedly risen in the firmament of his destiny. He was in a fever of anxiety. He trembled in the fearful apprehension that she would escape him. Whilst drinking in, with intoxicating delight, the rich draughts from her large, lustrous eye, her conductor approached her. At that moment she recognised a female acquaintance in the rear of the chair of the venerable chieftain. Her countenance at once seemed illuminated with joy. She advanced rapidly, yet gracefully, to shake the hand of her friend.

"There is nature for you—there is soul—there is heart," said Monmouth Hargrave. "There are those imperishable qualities for which I have searched so long. No cold formality—no prim precision—no studied elegance—but the outpourings of a heart, true to the glowing feelings of nature."

But ere he had time to speak further, her conductor led her to the aged soldier, and in an undertone whispered an introduction. We strained our ears to catch the name, but our distance was too great. The chief gazed, for a moment, in fixed admiration. His eye lighted up, for a second, with the fire of youth. She affectionately took his hand, and while her soul swelled, under the proud recollection of his many chivalrous

deeds, she gracefully bent forward and imprinted a holy kiss upon his weather-beaten brow. Monmouth Hargrave riveted his distended eyes upon her, and she reddened to the temples. "With moistened eye and brimful heart, she turned hastily away, and left the crowded hall.

My friend appeared to be wrapt in thought. The scene had past like enchantment before him. He was at length restored to consciousness and despair—for the idol of his soul had disappeared, like a being from another and a brighter world, leaving no trace behind.

With the impulsive feelings of his nature, when properly roused, he rushed upon the portico, just in time to catch the outlines of a lady as she sprang

into her carriage.

" By Heaven it is she. I would know her graceful form any where," he said.

" For God's sake, have some prudence—do you not see that we are overheard 1" said I, stopping him in his full career.

He hurried me along in the wake of the fast whirling vehicle, despite of my remonstrances. It disappeared behind the houses—and again appeared. At last it stopped at a house just in sight, and as she was handed up the steps, Hargrave caught another look at her magic form.

" Now that I know her whereabouts," he said animatedly, " let us devise some scheme for an introduction. As she is housed she will not leave the city, but go to the levee. I will meet her there at all hazards. Let us away to prepare for it." As my friend ceased talking we entered our hotel.

I busied myself on the streets to ascertain the name of that enchanting fair one. I was not long left to conjecture. 8he was the beautiful and accomplished Lucretia Fordyce. There was a striking similarity between the general outlines of her touching history and that of Monmouth Hargrave. The thread of their lives had been colored in the dark stream of misfortune. She had bowed, like the lily, broken down by the rude storm to the wild tempest of calamity. Her young affections had been crushed by the relentless hand of the destroyer. She had wept bitter tears over the lost and loved.

I shall never forget the anguish with which Hargrave received the brief history of her who had played such fantastic tricks with his heart. He had fallen violently in love at first sight, without knowing with whom. His whole soul was absorbed with the delicious feeling. He had wooed the return of the all-transporting emotions of love, with a constant and unswerving devotion. The afflicted never waited for the troubling of the waters with

more pious patience. And when he felt his heart flutter with those pleasurable sensations, he hugged himself with all the rapture of a new delight. His was the frenzy of the soul—the uncalculating and undoubting passion of a frank, honest, and yet, perhaps, too impulsive heart.

The information that she was a widow threw him all aback. His lip quivered—the blood rushed to his face. I saw the struggle that was going on in his breast. It heaved like a tumultuous sea. For an hour he spoke not but with a hurried stride paced the floor in the agony of despair. He had said foolishly that he would never wed a widow. But when were even the strongest resolutions, in the way of that resistless torrent love, much less the crude, the idle, and the undigested expressions of the moment

"By Heaven," he at length exclaimed, "I was a fool to have a prejudice against the stricken in heart and the blasted in hope." The cloud upon his brow floated away, and left the smiles of Heaven reposing in its stead. "I will see her to-night at the levee, at all events. Her afflictions have hallowed and consecrated her. I had wished a heart untainted by the mildew of grief—but the hand of an unseen power is visible in this."

To the levee we went but not till late. The apart merits were crowded to excess. Hundreds of both sexes were congregated, I might almost say, literally packed, in a few small rooms. There were sparkling eyes of every hue, and lovely forms of every shape. It was the high festival of beauty—joy beamed from every eye, and smiles wreathed every face. Delight was depicted on every countenance, and pleasure sat regent in every breast.

"Come," said Monmouth Hargrave, "we will institute a search for lady mine." So dense was the crowd that the only way of advancing, was by edging through sideways. We ranged from parlor to hall—from hall to chamber—from basement to attic—but in vain—all in vain. That strange, yet familiar face, could nowhere be found. The impression was too indelibly engraven upon my friend's heart to be forgotten. Many told us she was there, and the

bright centre of attraction. But ere they could point the place, she had vanished, like lightning amid the storm. After hours of anxious search, we were informed that she had left for the theater. To the theatre we hurried. Like wave succeeding wave, so does disappointment succeed disappointment. From the theatre she had gone to her boarding-house.

"Better luck next time," said I.

"Better luck, indeed," said Monmouth Hargrave, fretted with his failure. "I tell you that I have a presentiment, good luck will never come of this chase. You need not smile in derision, I am not superstitious. But 'coming events cast their shadows before.' Thus —thus will she ever elude me when my hopes are brightest. And yet, will I win her, with the spirit of valor and true love, though the stern hand of destiny hold me back. Mine—mine, she must be—or solitary and alone will I mark my weary way upon the broad earth till death closes the scene."

Time flew as on angels' wings. Monmouth Hargrave found himself, after the lapse of three months, by the side of the young, the admired, and beloved Lucretia Fordyce. No longer the victim of gloomy forebodings, his soul was laved in the more genial waters of all confiding love. Her small white hand was left unresistingly in his. It was one of those hands which time changes not, but which remains beautiful to the last. How many burning kisses he imprinted upon it! Hargrave could have listened forever to the music of her voice, and the rich and glowing imagery of her words. There was a charm in her chaste pronunciation, and her enchanting tones which had an almost magical influence upon him.

Thoughts were too busy, on this occasion, for extended speech. His soul for a moment, in anticipation of success, seemed to fold its wings in tranquil bliss like a bird upon its perch. At length, imprinting a more fervid kiss than ever upon that delicate hand, he poured out his soul in an impassioned strain of undissembled feeling which thrilled to her heart. Her head sank on

his bosom: she murmured his name; and when Monmouth Hargrave left her that evening it was as her affianced husband.

" And do you believe in presentiments now?" said I, a few months later, in allusion to his remark made on the night he had sought her at the levee and theatre in vain.

" No, no," he replied, laughing, " but come and see us. Mrs. Hargrave has been my wife three months, and I love her better every day. Her's is the soul of an angel in a human form."

What a change in Monmouth Hargrave! And love had done all this.



AGNES WALTHAM.

By ELLEN ASHTON.

" Put on your thick shoes, my love, when you go out," said Mrs. Waltham to her daughter, as the latter rose to dress for a promenade.

" Oh! mamma, they are so clumsy," was the reply of Agnes.

" But, my dear, the pavements are yet damp from yesterday's rain, and you know you are peculiarly susceptible to cold."

" But I will walk on the sunny side, and not stop a minute to talk. Indeed, indeed there is no danger. Miss Beresford, who is to call for me, always wears so neat a shoe—I should be ashamed to go with her if I had on those thick boots."

The discussion continued for some time longer, but ended, as discussions between fond mothers and pleading daughters too often do, in the surrender of the parent. Agnes tripped off to array herself for the walk, and soon departed, all radiant with smiles. She was absent until twilight.

"How fine a color you have to-night" said her doting father, "exercise has called a bloom to your cheek—ah!" he continued teasingly, "Edward ought to be here now—he would be charmed with the brilliancy of your complexion."

Agnes turned away blushing, for Edward was her affianced lover, and their marriage was to take place the ensuing spring.

In the evening Edward came, and he too remarked the high bloom in the cheek of Agnes.

"I have been taking a walk," she answered, in reply to an allusion he made to it, "and the bracing air has called an unwonted color to my cheek. You know you have often told me that we American ladies never take sufficient exercise, and that therefore, as a class, we are wan and sickly looking."

"True—but your bloom seems almost unnaturally high, and I would have attributed it to a fever were you not in such a flow of spirits. Have you not been walking out again with thin shoes?"

Agnes looked down, and said nothing.

"Dear Agnes," said her lover, after a pause, "why will you be so imprudent? . You know your constitution is none of the strongest, and a slight cold, caught by such thoughtlessness as this, often ends in consumption."

" But none of our family are consumptive," quickly retorted Agnes, looking up; and laying her hand on Edward's arm, she continued smiling with bewitching sweetness, " there, now, dismiss your fears—I never felt better in my life, and as for colds, why, I have had them a thousand times."

There was a look of deep seriousness on the lover's face as he replied,

"A cold, Agnes, from its very slightness, is our most insidious enemy. If we are attacked with any serious disease—a fever, the pleurisy, an inflammation of the throat—we ask the advice of a physician at once, or at least apply those remedies which we know to be efficient in the case. The consequence is that we combat the disorder before it has become firmly seated, and, in nine cases out of ten, save our life. But with a cold we pursue a different treatment. It seems so slight a thing that we laugh at it and leave it to cure itself, nor do we awake from our delusion, although the cough, attending the cold, may continue for a month. By and bye, however, we begin to feel a pain in the breast, and our cough increases until it racks our frame by day, and deprives us of that rest which is so necessary at night. Now perhaps we begin to think there may be something serious in our cold, and we proceed at once to use severe remedies. Perhaps we are cured, and, if so, we grow ten times more careless, because we have experienced, in our case, that it is possible to neglect a cold, and yet eventually cure it. We become fool-hardy, until finally we take cold again, neglect it as we did before, and fall victims to consumption, in spite of our desperate efforts, when it is too late, to shake off our cold. How many of both sexes—the talented, the beautiful, the young— have we seen thus go down to the grave! How many a young man and blooming maiden, if asked, on their death-bed, why 'they were so early hurried to the tomb?' might answer, 'because we neglected a slight cold!' Look over the records of the Health offices of our cities, and you will find that nearly one third of the adults die of consumption—and nine-tenths of the victims to this death fall a prey to the insidious approach of a slight cold. How often have we conversed on this subject, and yet, dear Agnes, you are still imprudent."

He ceased, for the sound of sobbing met his ear, and bending over Agnes—for she had turned away her head—he saw that she was weeping. The lover was melted. He felt that he was right, but he could not resist those tears. He drew her tenderly toward him.

"Forgive me, dearest," he said soothingly, "I spoke, perhaps, too harshly; but I did not mean to hurt your feelings. Come, let us forget what has past; and I will hear you play that new march I brought you the other evening."

Alas! that the giving so needful a lesson should be a thing for which pardon should be asked.

The following morning Agnes had a slight head-ache, but it was attributed by her fond mother to what her lover had said the evening before, and to a sleepless night passed in consequence of it.

"Agnes, you have a slight cold," said her father, at the tea-table, "don't you think so?"

"Oh! no, pa," she answered gaily, "I only coughed because I foolishly ran down stairs."

"Well I hope not," was the parent's reply.

That evening Edward did not come, as he was engaged in transacting important business; but the ensuing day brought him to Mr. Waltham's parlor. He noticed that Agnes had a slight cough, but remembering the events of his last visit, he said nothing. Nor, on a second visit, when the cold still continued, did he venture to expostulate by words, though he could not restrain a look.

"You must do something for that cold," said her father, on the ensuing

morning, " I heard you coughing violently after you retired, and, when I awoke in the night, you were still coughing. It may become a serious matter. I would advise you to remain in for a few days, and commit yourself to your mother as a nurse. These colds ought not to be trifled with."

" Oh! papa, it is nothing," replied Agnes, " and will soon cure itself. Besides it is impossible for me to stay at home—you know I am to be bridesmaid for Miss Henrickson, and she will be married to-morrow—how could you have forgotten it?"

"We often forget such things, important as they are to young ladies," answered her father, smiling, "but since you can't remain at home, you must take extraordinary care of yourself."

" Oh! that I will do, never fear. And don't alarm yourself about my cold, dear papa," said Agnes, throwing her arms about his neck, and fondly kissing him, "I declare you and Edward are enough to frighten one."

The wedding of her friend took place, and was followed by a round of parties, for the winter was unusually gay, and the friends of the married couple vied with each other in the splendor and number of their entertainments. Night after night Agnes was out until one and two o'clock at these assemblages. Her parents no longer took notice of her cold, and nothing, therefore, was said about it, but could they have heard, in the night, the efforts of their daughter to stifle a cough, lest it should awaken them, they would have been seriously alarmed. Even Edward was scarcely aware that she had a cough, so perseveringly did she check every manifestation of it in his presence. And thus two fatal months passed on.

One night she had been dancing in a crowded room, and, when she ceased, the heat was so excessive that she ran to a window for a moment's breath of air. Her partner was a thoughtless young man, who, like herself, saw no imprudence in the act, but remained talking with her, while the

refreshments were handed, and until the next set was called. Unfortunately her lover was not present, having been detained by imperative business. She often sought the window during the evening, but the consequences began to show themselves as soon as she left the room to retire. Before she reached home a violent shivering seized her, and she went to bed really ill; but, conscious of her imprudence, and hoping to feel better in the morning, she did not awake her parents.

In the morning she had a violent head-ache, attended with pain; and was forced to confess herself really ill. She was now penitent, and willing to submit to the application of any remedy.

Medicines were immediately resorted to, and apparently with success, for her fever was broken, and before long she was able to resume her ordinary duties in the house, though it was not deemed prudent, as yet, to suffer her to go out in the evenings. Edward was an anxious attendant at her side, while she remained a prisoner in the house, and nothing could exceed the delicacy with which he anticipated her every wish. He never alluded to her imprudence, but his mournful look of unavoidable reproach when he first heard of her thoughtlessness, haunted her memory, and she resolved never again to disregard his advice. But alas! the opportunity to shew her obedience to his wishes was deferred from day to day; for a violent cough had made its appearance, simultaneously with her fever, and though the latter had been broken, the former still remained. Remedy after remedy was tried, but in vain. At length the family began to be alarmed. Physicians were now called in, though secretly, lest Agnes should be frightened, and their opinions listened to with beating hearts. They recommended various remedies, which were eagerly tried; but all failed. Winter was now fast approaching, and a warmer climate was hinted at, though the physicians still said they hoped it was not a case of consumption. To Cuba accordingly Mr. and Mrs. Waltham took their only child. Edward could not accompany them, but he promised to write by every packet, and parted from them with a heavy heart.

The winter months dragged slowly away, during which Edward received weekly letters from Cuba, sometimes holding out hope and sometimes breathing almost despair. His spirits began to fall. Spring was now at hand—that spring in which he and Agnes were to have been married—and gloomy forebodings took possession of his heart. One evening he suddenly received a message that the Walthams had returned and wished to see him. With a trembling heart he hastened to their dwelling, and rushed, mad with fears, into Agnes' sick room, almost without being announced. Oh! the sight that met his eyes. Pale, and worn to a skeleton, yet with the lustrous eye and crimson cheek of the consumption, Agnes Waltham met the eye of her lover, who had parted with her, when she wore at least the appearance of health. The change was too much for him, he staggered to a chair, and for some minutes could not speak. Her parents wept aloud.

Edward at length found courage to look on Agnes again. She was deeply affected, and seemed also unable to speak. But oh! the look of earnest pleading, of deep, unchanging love with which she regarded her lover.

"Edward," at length said Agnes, speaking with difficulty, and extending her wan hand, "I am dying, and I have long known it. To my fate I am resigned. My only wish has been to reach home, and ask your forgiveness ere I go hence. Had I followed your counsels; had I been less careless of my health, I would now have been well, and we would all have been happy. But the deed is done. I hope my heavenly father," she continued, raising her meek eyes above, "has forgiven me, and now I seek your pardon—"

"Oh! do not speak of it. God knows I have nothing to forgive," and he sobbed like a child.

"Yes! I have been sinful—vanity forebade me to do as you wished, and now I reap as I have sown. Oh! that fatal pride of dress. What matters it in the grave to which I am going in what I have been decked while here. But do not

weep for me," here a violent fit of coughing seized her, and for some minutes she could not speak. All wept. At length she gained strength to say,

"May God bless you, dear, dear Edward ! You will sometimes think of me when I am gone V

" Yes! yes! day and night, my own Agnes!" and he sobbed aloud.

She smiled—and it was an angel's smile—as she replied,

"Father, Edward—give me your hands—mother, dear mother, kiss me! I can now die happy. Farewell," and, almost before they were aware of it, her gentle spirit had departed.

Reader! my tale has a moral. May you, with God's blessing, profit by it.

☆

THE LADY'S

THE TWO SISTERS;

OR, DOMESTIC DUTIES.

By C. F. HALL.

Not more than five miles from the city of Philadelphia, on the banks of the Schuylkill, stands a princely mansion; and the traveller, as he approaches it, is immediately struck with the regularity and beauty of its outward appearance, and the taste that has been displayed by some fair hand, in the admirable arrangement of the flowers and various kinds of shrubbery, with

which the space in front is ornamented.

It was one of those delicious mornings with which we are often blessed in early spring, that I was induced to take a walk along the bank of the Schuylkill. As I strolled onward, I was lured to proceed by the continued variety that presented itself to my view. At one side was Fairmount, the river laving its base—on the other side were the wooded slopes that skirt the western bank of the stream. One object my attention would be drawn to some sail that moved majestically on the still waters : the next it would be called to the wood, where the many harbingers of spring were warbling their melodious notes. With such incentives I was led along, until I found myself in sight of the mansion that I have had occasion to mention. My curiosity became excited and I resolved to proceed. A few minutes walk brought me in front of the house, when my attention was drawn to a voice which I knew to be that of a lady singing. Looking up, I saw a face so lovely, that, for a moment, I almost believed myself dreaming. The features were nearly hid from view, by the rich auburn hair which hung in graceful ringlets, and nearly covered her neck of snowy whiteness. Her cheek was slightly tinged with a roseate hue, while her rich, dark eye did not diminish her beauty. I saw, by a small watering pot which she held in her hand, that she was watering the plants. When she looked up, the second time, her eye caught mine. As soon as she saw that I was observing her she silenced her voice, and continued her occupation. At this instant a gentleman, whom I took to be her parent, approached; and imagine my surprise when I recognised in him an old friend, who had been extensively engaged in mercantile pursuits, and had now retired from the busy scenes of life to enjoy himself in the bosom of his family. I shall introduce him to my readers under the assumed name of Richardson. After the usual salutations, and an introduction to his daughter—for my conjecture had been right—I entered into conversation with him. A half hour was agreeably spent, when I took my leave, highly gratified with my visit. I soon became, as it were, a constant visiter at his house. The family consisted of himself, wife, and two daughters, Mary and Julia; and at the time of my story they were at that age when

woman's charms appear most brilliant My readers have learned ere this that one was handsome; the other, if possible, exceeded her sister in point of beauty, but the qualities that were possessed by Julia, although she was not as handsome as Mary, made her seem more brilliant in the society in which they were both known. Being the children of wealthy parents, we should suppose, at least, that the mother would not choose to teach them domestic duties. Not so. This important female knowledge, she endeavored to instill into them. In the case of Julia she succeeded, but in that of Mary she failed. The delight of the latter was in popular music, in dancing, and in all the lighter and more ephemeral accomplishments. Julia, on the contrary, early became acquainted with those household duties which tend, more than all the fashionable accomplishments of the day, to educate woman for the province of a wife and mother. In vain the mother argued to Mary that riches sometimes take wings and fly away! Mary always replied, " I shall not learn, for I shall never marry a man, unless he is able to support me, and support me too without work, and what use is there in making a domestic of myself, when there are always plenty to be had. What! descend to the kitchen."

A few years passed, and suitors had offered and sued often the hand of each of the sisters, and had as often been rejected; until a person was introduced to Mary as Mr. Augustus Hamilton, a man possessed of considerable beauty, no small amount of information, extravagantly fond of every kind of amusement, and withal possessed of a fortune—in fact he was what the world generally term a gentleman, and such a person as Mary had long been endeavoring to become acquainted with. After a courtship of about two years, he led to the altar the lovely Mary Richardson. All remarked what a happy couple they were, and how well matched, for both were handsome, both possessed of wealth. In a month they were settled in a splendid mansion on Chesnut street, and as the views of Mrs. Hamilton were what is called aristocratic, every thing must be in keeping with the house in which they lived, and also with the society in which they moved. The house was accordingly furnished in magnificent style; and large parties followed each

other in quick succession. Mr. Hamilton, although possessed of ample means for their present enjoyment, was in a mercantile business, and subject, therefore, to all the fluctuations of commerce. He was little aware that the cloud of adversity was so soon to shroud him and the happy partner of his bosom in gloom. After living in the enjoyment of all that heart could wish for several years, it was ascertained that the liabilities of the house of Hamilton and Dresden were more than they could meet, and the feelings of Mr. Hamilton can be better imagined than described on the evening that he related to his wife their circumstances, and added that they should have to leave the house where they then resided, and take up their abode in some more humble dwelling in a more retired part of the city. Accordingly a house was procured, in the district called Kensington, and Mrs. Hamilton left, although with great reluctance, her magnificent mansion where, a few months before, wealth and affluence had held unbridled sway. But she did leave it, and when she came, as it were, into a new sphere, and had personally to provide for her own house, she then saw the great advantage of knowing how to superintend it. But, as she could not do this, Mr. Hamilton was obliged to procure a servant, much against his own inclination; but it could not be avoided, and accordingly one was obtained. Mrs. Hamilton tried, in every way in her power, to contribute to her husband's happiness; but it appeared to her that she could not; for he would come home and appear depressed in spirits; and very seldom (as he thought) did he find his wife ready to greet him with a smile. Her sullen and morose disposition, coupled with the idea that she was not competent to take charge of her own house, made him feel unhappy. Often when he came home hurried, dinner would not be ready. It went on in this manner for some time; until, coming home one day, after having had more to trouble him than usual, and not finding dinner ready at the usual time, he broke out into a violent passion, and left the house. The first blow had been struck, and with it had gone their happiness. Alas! Hamilton could not enjoy himself in his wife's society, for he believed that she did not try to contribute to his happiness. He soon began to resort to the haunts of vice, and thence to the intoxicating bowl, for the purpose of drowning previous sorrow. The

consequences soon followed. His crime was visited on his family, and they were discarded by their former friends and relatives. Here, we will leave them, and go back to the house of Richardson.

The hand of Julia, meantime, had been sought and gained, by a person who possessed the real qualities of a gentleman. He did not enjoy wealth, beauty, nor accomplishments, yet his good sense, sound mind, and forgiving disposition won him the good-will and esteem of all who knew him. About a year after the wedding of Mary, Julia was led to the altar by Mr. Charles Sebring. He moved, with his lovely wife, to a small town in the state of New Jersey, and entered upon a mercantile life. He procured a small, but neat house, and, as his wife was well acquainted with all domestic duties, his expenses were consequently quite small. When his daily labor was over, sweet would be his thoughts of meeting his lovely wife at the door, with a smile to greet him. His home was of all places the most dear to him—for it ever wore a neat and cheerful aspect. In the course of time his business increased, and he had accumulated property. Then he resolved to remove to Philadelphia, and enter into a more extensive business. Accordingly, the following spring found them in a neat, and handsome residence in that commercial mart. By economy Charles Sebring became a wealthy man. For years, however, they had heard nothing of Mary or her husband, for after he had been discarded by his friends in consequence of his dissolute habits, Hamilton had disappeared, leaving no clue to his residence. Mr. and Mrs. Sebring had often endeavored to discover his retreat and that of his family, but in vain. At length, one night, as Charles was returning from his store, he saw a number of boys gathered around some object, and, on approaching, he observed a person very much intoxicated. At first sight, he thought he would leave him, at the next moment he thought he might possibly render him some assistance; and accordingly approached him. Imagine his surprise on finding that it was his own brother-in-law, Augustus Hamilton. Yes! although that cheek had lost its roseate hue, although that voice had become harsh and brutal, there was still enough to tell that the inebriate was the once wealthy suitor of Mary. Charles raised him up, and conveyed

him to his home, if home it might be called, which was a small hovel in a narrow, dirty alley in the suburbs of the city. But what a sight met his eye! The furniture of the room consisted of two old chairs, one or two wooden stools, a part of a bed, and scarcely covering enough to shelter them; while on the hearth there lay a few expiring embers. The inmates of the room were a woman about half clothed, with one small child earnestly imploring its mother to give it something to eat. In that wan frame he recognised his wife's sister. He could not refrain, but bursting into tears, turned and left the house. But the entreaties of that child still sounded in his ear; he stopped and purchased some necessaries, ordered them sent around; and then hastened home, for he was somewhat later than usual. His wife sat at the window, watching his return, and as he entered, and she pressed her lips to his, he thanked God that he had shown his mercy and loving kindness to him in providing him such a partner for life! He appeared solemn and melancholy, and as his lovely wife sat down beside him, she looked up, and, with a smile upon her face, said,

" Charles what is the matter? have I done anything to offend you?"

He said " no," and promised that soon she should know all. When morning came he requested her to take a walk! She consented, and he bent his steps immediately to the place where he had been the evening before, resolved to know the worst. As they entered the alley, Julia remarked,

" Why, Charles, where are you going? there cannot certainly be anybody here that you want to see!"

"Yes, there is," he replied, "I always want to help the poor and needy."

"Pardon me, Charles, pardon me," said she, "how glad I am that we have come." By this time they had reached the door. He resolved to enter without knocking, and accordingly taking his wife by the hand he walked in. As Julia entered she cast her eyes around her, and what a sight met her gaze! She

stood for a moment, as it were, motionless; throwing her eyes on the woman, she exclaimed, " Charles—my sister—my sister—my only sister," and the next moment they were in each others arms. Many and bitter were the tears that were shed upon each others bosom. In a short time they relaxed their grasp; when it was found that Mary had fainted. Charles instantly procured assistance, had her and her daughter conveyed to his own home, where she had all the attention that was required. She soon regained her health. His next purpose was to find her husband. This, with some difficulty, he succeeded in doing, after which he brought him to his own home.

By the blessing of Providence Mr. Hamilton, in a few months, reformed. He then related to us, as far as memory served him, the sufferings of his family, and the history of his own career in vice since we left him in our story. In a short time after these events had transpired, Mr. Hamilton, now the husband of a happy wife, associated himself in business with his brother, and in a few years was blessed again with wealth.

Mrs. Hamilton will never bring up her lovely daughter except in habits of industry and economy, though she will not forget to instil into her those graces which shine so brilliant in woman, for a knowledge of domestic duties and all the graces of a lady are not incompatible. " Had I not neglected my household cares," Mrs. Hamilton was wont to say, "I should never have passed through what I have, and now I am thankful that I have a kind brother, a kind sister, and a kind husband. I have learnt this lesson—always bring up a daughter in such a manner that she may be competent to take charge of her own house, regardless of what may be her situation in life."



THE LADY CLARA.

BY J. H. DANA.

My friend Beaumont was the descendant of one of the oldest and proudest families of England, his forefathers having fought at Cressy, Poitiers. and, for aught I know, at Hastings itself. He could trace his descent from one silk and ermine clad earl to another, and then, through a long succession of steel clad barons, up to a certain Rolla Beaumont of Normandy, who, in his turn, had a whole array of sea-kings for ancestors at his back. If blood, therefore, could do anything for a man, Beaumont was charged to the brim with it. But alack a day ! blood will not put meat into one's mouth; and so Dick knew to his cost. The earldom—never very rich at the best—had been growing poorer and poorer through a long series of generations, like an old spinster becoming thinner and more angular with every year, and now the estates scarcely afforded a decent competence to the proud elder brother of Dick, while Dick himself was left with a most " beggarly account of empty boxes." But if he was poor he was philosophic, and care never caught him with a wry mouth. His character, however, will develop itself in the course of my story. I will only premise that I was, at this time, in London, and that it was drawing toward the close of the season. We met at the door of my rooms, when Dick, linking his arm in mine in his familiar way, accepted my invitation to spend an hour over a flask of Sillery.

"Are you going down to Arlford Castle?" I said, "my invitation was so warmly given that I cannot resist it. I understand you too were invited."

"So I am, but I don't think I shall go. You must know Arlford Castle is the greatest bore of my life. I have never been there and never intend to go."

"Not intend to go to Arlford Castle—why, I should think the fame of Lady Clara's beauty would carry you there at the first chance. Faith! my dear fellow, she is said to be a perfect Juno."

"Very possibly, but it is the Lady Clara who keeps me away. You seem surprised, and I will explain. You know the custom here—in your republican

land it may be different—to trade birth for gold in matrimony. Well my father and the father of Lady Clara were intimate at school. But Lord Seaforth's peerage only dated back to the Revolution, while ours was as old as the Norman Conquest. The Sea forth estates, however, are very extensive, and the dower of the daughter greater than the whole wealth of our earldom. So, when the Lady Clara first saw light, a few years after my birth, it was arranged that she and I should be married. Things went on very swimmingly, as the old folks thought, until a few years ago, when my parent died, and I began to think for myself. Then it struck me that this being traded away like a horse was incompatible with my manhood, however compatible it might be with ancient blood, for you must know that I am, on this subject, a bit of a democrat. So I forswore Arlford Castle, and never could be coaxed or driven there. When I grew up, however, and began to feel the value of money—that "da nobiscum " of civilized life—my resolution began to stagger, and would have, perhaps, given way, had not an incident occurred which put all thought of Lady Clara to flight.

" It was at a county ball, when I was just twenty, that I met the most beautiful of creatures, a dark-haired, ebon-eyed, goddess-like woman. I call her woman because, though full two years younger than myself, she was even then no longer a girl. If I live to the age of Methuselah I shall never forget those liquid eyes, that divine form, or the melodious music of her tongue. I sought and obtained an introduction. She was a Miss Cleveland—doubtless from the name the descendant of some honest burgher. My lordly elder brother would have sneered at her, but what cared I for aristocratic ancestry?—for, to tell the truth, our titled forefathers were no better than robbers, and deserved to be hung, while these same despised burghers were the only honest men in the land. I danced with her, promenaded with her, and hung around her the whole evening. In a word I was entranced, and, to cut a long story short, experienced, for the first time, what love really is. There is a world of romance in me—as you have often told me—if one will go deep enough to find it, and, therefore, you will not be surprised when I tell you that, from that hour to this, though I have never seen Miss

Cleveland since, her image has been uppermost in my thoughts. She passed away like a dream from that assembly, and no one knew whence she came or whither she was going. All I could learn was that she stopped in a travelling carriage at one of the hotels, and hearing of the ball, took a whim to stay. Early the ensuing morning, and hours before we were out of our beds, she had re-commenced her journey, with no travelling companions except the maid, and an old gentleman who had chaperoned her to the ball. Now there's a romance in real life for you."

I had long suspected the existence of a secret passion for some unknown lady in Dick's breast, so I was not as much surprised as I otherwise would have been.

" But have you never found any clue to this mysterious lady-love."

" Never—and there's the deuce of it I have hunted high and low, and been in almost every county of England, but no Miss Cleveland can I find, who answers to my description. I begin to suspect she is an American, and you must not be surprised if, some of these days, I cross the Atlantic in search of her."

"I should give up the chase, especially with Lady Clara Arlford in the prospective. Come—go down to the Castle with me—you haven't seen her since you were both children, and, from all I hear, she has grown up a perfect goddess. Who knows but she may drive this plebeian Miss Cleveland out of your head?"

"Her dower would certainly be comfortable," said Dick, with a shrug, "I hate a profession, but must soon do something, or starve. But then I dislike marrying an heiress."

" But perhaps Lady Clara recollects you only too well for her own peace. They say she has refused a score of suitors."

" I confess a wish to see her, though I don't want her to see me—but there's the bore."

"Ah! I have it," I said, after a minute's thought, " there is an inn, in the village near the Castle, where you can stay disguised—say as a travelling artist, for you sketch well, and the scenery about Arlford is celebrated for its picturesque character. Follow me down, and trust me to give you an opportunity to see the Lady Clara."

Dick paused for a minute in deep thought, and then looking up, exclaimed,

"Faith, I'll take your advice. There's a bit of romance about your plan that commends it to my imagination. When do you start?"

" On Monday."

" Then I 'll precede you down, so as to prevent suspicion. I shall leave town to-morrow," he said, with his usual decision of character, when once aroused.

I heard no more of Dick until I reached Arlford Castle. The company was large and select, comprising some of the most beautiful women in England, but among them the Lady Clara shone pre-eminent. All that I had heard of her loveliness was far surpassed by the reality. Her person was tall and queenly, perhaps too much inclined to en bon point , but still exquisitely graceful, and having a majesty that overawed the senses. And then her eyes!—dark, full and lustrous, they had in them the spell of a sybil. Never had a woman approached so nigh to my standard of lordly beauty, and I wished a dozen times every half hour that my friend Dick could see her. I felt convinced that he was more than mortal if he did not at once forget Miss Cleveland, and bow at the shrine of the Lady Clara.

" Confound the fellow," I said to myself, " here is a goddess with a fortune at his feet, and he goes whining through the country after some unknown and wandering damsel who may, for all he knows, be married ere this, to some dull, common place soap-chandler. But we'll see what can be done in the way of a cure."

Two days had elapsed before I thought it safe to visit the little inn, and there, sure enough, was Dick, tricked out in a disguise through which his own parents could

scarcely have detected him. I followed him up stairs into his room, and when the door was locked we mutually related our adventures. I spoke of the Lady Clara in enthusiastic terms.

" Can't we bring our farce to a close soon," said Dick, yawning, "for I'm becoming deucedly tired of being cooped up here, like a sheep for the slaughter; or trudging over rocks and through copses, with a sketch book, to keep up my character. The first of September will be here tomorrow, and there is prime shooting on my brother's preserves, but if I loiter here much longer I shall lose much of the sport. The landlady, too, begins to look suspicious, and has once or twice given me a look that said, as plainly as looks could say, that I was too fastidious for a travelling artist."

" Well," said I, " suppose we try it now. Come with me to the Castle. We'll loiter about as if to pick out a good moonlight view, and who knows but we may catch a glimpse of the Lady Clara."

" Done," said Dick; and wo started.

The Castle lay in deep shadow as we approached it, and as the moonlight silvered the old gothic towers, and tipped the abutting edges of the carved work that every where adorned the noble pile, the scene presented to the eye was one that reminded me of the enchanted palaces of the Arabian

Nights.. We stopped, as if by a common impulse, to gaze on the spectacle. Suddenly the figure of a lady appeared in an open gallery above us, where she stood, for some minutes, totally unconscious of our vicinity, for we were hidden under the shadow of a huge oak that threw its thick foliage far and wide over us. The moon was sailing high in Heaven, and on that bright luminary the lady gazed as if in rapt admiration. The first glance at the fair apparition assured me it was the Lady Clara; and never had she appeared more lovely. Attired in a magnificent robe of velvet, with her hair falling in luxuriant tresses down her neck, and her snowy and rounded shoulders seeming whiter than driven snow in the moonlight, she looked a divinity, holding communion with up-turned eyes, with a sister divinity of the skies. She wore a string of pearls around her neck, and a white rose nestling in her bosom—fit types of her maiden purity. I was so entranced by the sight that, for a minute, I had forgot my companion, when I felt him nervously clutch my arm. I looked around.

"Heavens how magnificent—it is—it is—I have found her," he said, agitatedly.

"Found who?"

"Miss Cleveland. Isn't she a superb creature. By George, the Lady Clara, with her dower, may go to the dogs."

I burst into uncontrollable laughter, for, if a world had been the price of restraint, I could not have refrained. The fair apparition disappeared in an instant.

"Confound you," said Dick, half angrily, "what makes you so merry? You have frightened away my Sultana."

"Merry," said I, "why here you've been avoiding the Lady Clara for years, and searching all England for Miss Cleveland, when they're but one and the

same person," and again I laughed until the tears ran out of my eyes.

Dick gazed at me in blank wonder. Never did a poor fellow look more like a fool. This only increased my mirth, and at length Dick joined in it as heartily as myself, capering about in his extravagant joy, until I almost began to think his wits were deranged.

The next day a post chaise and four dashed through the park of Arlford Castle, and my friend Dick paid his first visit since boyhood to the Lady Clara. Some little surprise was felt, though not evinced at his visit; and the lady herself betrayed decided embarrassment Dick prospered wonderfully in his wooing, and the next summer he led to the altar the Lady Clara.

It was not until after his marriage that his bride explained to him the little plot connected with her assumption of the name of Miss Cleveland. She was travelling, with her father, from Arlford Castle to London, when she heard of the county ball, and of Dick's intended presence. Piqued at his studied neglect of her she resolved to visit the assembly under an assumed name. This was easily effected. The result is known. But alas! in striving to win Dick, the Lady Clara lost her own heart. Delicacy forbade her afterward to reveal her disguise, and so she was compelled to trust to accident. But years elapsed, as we have seen, before she again met her lover.

The Lady Clara is now a matron of thirty, and the last steamer informs me that Dick has fallen heir to the earldom, his elder brother having died during the Queen's visit to Scotland. Lucky!—wasn't he?

